

L 430 - Scope Notes

BACKGROUND: A scope note generally serves to limit the scope of an authorized term as used in the catalog, thereby helping readers determine the extent to which the term reflects the material they seek, and making it possible for catalogers to maintain consistency in the way terms are assigned. Scope notes are especially useful for terms that represent new concepts or that employ terminology not yet firmly established in the language. This instruction sheet describes the types of scope notes used in LCDGT and the procedures for submitting proposals to add scope notes to new or existing demographic group terms.

1. Types of scope notes.

a. A single term defined without reference to any other authorized term. This type of note is required in situations where various reference works consulted in doing research fail to agree, and usage does not offer a sufficiently precise definition. It is also necessary when the meaning of the term is potentially ambiguous or obscure.

Example:

Empresses

Women rulers of empires and wives or consorts of emperors.

This type of note may also be included if the note will serve a useful purpose.

b. Two or more closely related or overlapping terms. This type of note provides contrasting information regarding the scope and usage of superficially similar authorized terms. When one authorized term is defined or described with reference to one or more other authorized terms, reciprocal notes are provided under all other terms to which the original note refers. The wording of the reciprocal note is a mirror image of that of the original note, and the two notes should be composed using the following format:

[Description of Term A]. For [description of Term B] see [Term B].

Examples:

Saint Martiners

Residents of the West Indian island of Saint Martin. For residents of the collectivity of Saint Martin see Saint-Martinois (Collectivity of Saint Martin).

Saint-Martinois (Collectivity of Saint Martin)

Residents of the collectivity of Saint Martin. For residents of the West Indian island of Saint Martin see Saint Martiners.

2. Wording and style of scope notes. Scope notes should convey essential information as briefly, succinctly, and straightforwardly as possible.

3. Subject example tracing note. Provide a “subject example tracing note” for each term described in contrast to the other, or used as an example, in a scope note. This note indicates in which authority records a term is mentioned, and is used to maintain LCDGT. See L 545 - MARC Authority Records for LC Demographic Group Terms for examples of the note in MARC 21 format.

Examples:

Administrative assistants

People employed to perform administrative duties. For people who manage correspondence and routine work for a superior see Secretaries.

Note under: Secretaries

Secretaries

People who manage correspondence and routine work for a superior. For people employed to perform administrative duties see Administrative assistants.

Note under: Administrative assistants

4. Proposing a scope note for a new term being established. See L 455 - Submitting New LCDGT Proposals.